

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 199586

11

ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 DPW-01 IO-14 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03

SS-20 RSC-01 H-03 DODE-00 L-03 PRS-01 SR-02 ORM-03

AID-20 USIA-15 /140 R

DRAFTED BY EA/VN:JRBULLINGTON:BK

APPROVED BY EA/VN:RHWENZEL

EUR/WE:RPGALLAGHER

----- 111832

R 111955Z SEP 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 199586

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, VT, VS

SUBJECT: PAPAL CONCERN OVER SITUATION IN SOUTH VIET-NAM

REF: A. ROME 11881; B. SAIGON 11478

1. IN ADDITION TO MATERIAL PROVIDED REF B, YOU MAY WISH TO
DRAW ON FOLLOWING FOR PRESENTATION TO ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI
OR HIS DEPUTY:

A. HANOI HAS BEEN BUILDING UP ITS FORCES IN THE SOUTH EVER
SINCE (AND IN FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF) THE PARIS AGREEMENT.

-- THERE ARE NOW MORE NVA COMBAT TROOPS IN THE SOUTH
(210,000) THAN EVER BEFORE DURING THE WAR, ALONG WITH MORE
ARMOR, ARTILLERY, AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONRY THAN EVER BE-
FORE. ADDITIONALLY, THERE ARE ABOUT 75,000 VIET CONG
(NATIVE SOUTHERN) COMBAT TROOPS.

-- THEY HAVE ENOUGH SUPPLIES ALREADY PRE-POSITIONED IN THE
SOUTH OR ADJACENT BORDER AREAS TO SUPPORT A HEAVY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 199586

OFFENSIVE FOR MORE THAN A YEAR.

-- SIX RESERVE DIVISIONS IN THE NORTH, PLUS A GREATLY IMPROVED ROAD NETWORK OVER WHICH THEY CAN MOVE TO THE SOUTH IN A FEW DAYS, GIVES HANOI THE POSSIBILITY OF HEAVY AND RAPID REINFORCEMENT.

-- A NOVEL NEW THREAT IS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE, WHICH HAS BEEN DEPLOYING FURTHER SOUTHWARD WITHIN THE DRV DURING RECENT MONTHS.

B. DURING THE FIRST YEAR FOLLOWING THE PARIS AGREEMENT, HANOI SHOWED SOME MODERATION IN UTILIZATION OF ITS FORCES IN THE SOUTH, AND THE LEVEL OF WARFARE DROPPED TO ABOUT A THIRD OF WHAT IT HAD BEEN IN THE YEARS PRECEDING THE AGREEMENT. HOWEVER:

-- SINCE LATE MARCH, SUSTAINED NORTH VIETNAMESE MULTI-REGIMENTAL ATTACKS, PARTICULARLY NORTHWEST OF SAIGON AND SOUTH OF DANANG, PLUS INCREASED ACTIVITY ELSEWHERE, HAVE RAISED THE INTENSITY OF THE FIGHTING BACK TO NORMAL PRE-AGREEMENT LEVELS.

-- RECENT INTELLIGENCE POINTS TO FURTHER AND STILL HEAVIER NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACKS IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THOUGH ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT AN ALL-OUT, COUNTRYWIDE OFFENSIVE.

-- ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN OF NORTH VIETNAMESE INTENTIONS, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THEY ARE SEEKING TO WEAKEN GVN FORCES, IMPROVE THEIR OWN POSITIONS, AND GENERALLY "PREPARE THE BATTLEFIELD" FOR AN EVEN GREATER MILITARY PUSH IN 1975.

C. ON THE OTHER HAND, GVN FORCES HAVE ALSO BEEN STRENGTHENED OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS.

-- THE BIG U. S. MILITARY AID EFFORT JUST BEFORE THE AGREEMENT LEFT THEM A VERY GOOD EQUIPMENT BASE.

-- THEY HAVE PERFORMED WELL AND GENERALLY HELD THEIR OWN IN THE POST-AGREEMENT FIGHTING.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 199586

-- POLITICALLY, THE GVN IS STRONGER AND THE COMMUNISTS ARE WEAKER THAN AT ANY TIME IN MORE THAN A DECADE, AND THIS RELATIVE GVN POLITICAL STRENGTH IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE ABILITY OF ITS FORCES THUS FAR TO MAINTAIN THE MILITARY BALANCE.

D. ALSO, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE SOME SERIOUS WEAKNESSES.

-- THEY STILL HAVE NO WIDESPREAD POPULAR SUPPORT IN THE SOUTH; THEY CONTROL LESS THAN 10 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION; AND THEY ARE LARGELY CONFINED TO REMOTE BORDER AREAS AND ISOLATED ENCLAVES.

-- THEY FACE SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BOTH IN THE NORTH AND IN THE AREAS THEY CONTROL IN THE SOUTH.

-- THANKS TO THE DETENTE WE HAVE ACHIEVED WITH THE SOVIETS AND CHINESE, THEY CAN NO LONGER BE SURE OF UNLIMITED BACKING FROM THESE POWERS.

E. CONSEQUENTLY, WHILE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE IMPROVED THEIR MILITARY POSITION, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE BALANCE HAS TILTED IN THEIR FAVOR OR THAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF ACHIEVING AN OVERALL MILITARY VICTORY IN THE SOUTH. THEY ARE CERTAINLY CAPABLE, HOWEVER, OF INCREASING STILL FURTHER THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE AND CAUSING STILL MORE SUFFERING TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE.

F. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE CAN BE DETERRED FROM LAUNCHING AN ALL-OUT OFFENSIVE. WHETHER OR NOT THEY DECIDE ONCE AGAIN TO SEEK AN ALL-OUT MILITARY SOLUTION WILL BE IN LARGE MEASURE DETERMINED BY:

-- THE LEVEL OF SUPPORT SOUTH VIET-NAM RECEIVES FROM ITS FRIENDS, AND WHETHER OR NOT THIS SUPPORT IS SUFFICIENT TO MAINTAIN THE SORT OF BALANCE WHICH MADE THE PARIS AGREEMENT POSSIBLE. FOR OUR PART, THE USG IS DETERMINED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO MAINTAIN THIS BALANCE AND FULFILL OUR OBLIGATIONS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 199586

-- THE DEGREE OF RESTRAINT THE CHINESE AND SOVIETS EXERCISE ON HANOI, PARTICULARLY IN PROVISION OF MILITARY AID.

-- THE WEIGHT OF WORLD OPINION IN CONDEMNING HANOI'S CONTINUED AGGRESSION.

-- THE STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE, WHICH HAS THUS FAR BEEN SUPERB IN RISING TO MEET HANOI'S CHALLENGE TO THEIR FREEDOM AND RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION.

G. IT IS NOT ONLY THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIET-NAM, HOWEVER, BUT ALSO PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, WHO HAVE A MAJOR INTEREST IN PRECLUDING A NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY VICTORY.

SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE VERY DETRIMENTAL TO ONGOING EFFORTS TO REDUCE WORLD TENSIONS AND BUILD A STRUCTURE OF PEACE.

H. THE CATHOLICS OF SOUTH VIET-NAM HAVE A GREAT STAKE IN THE OUTCOME OF THE STRUGGLE, PARTICULARLY SINCE NEARLY A MILLION OF THEM HAVE ALREADY FLED ONCE FROM HANOI'S

RULE, WHEN THEY CHOSE TO MOVE SOUTH IN 1954 AND 1955. ACTUALLY, IT WAS THIS MOVEMENT, WHICH OCCURRED TWENTY YEARS AGO THIS MONTH THAT MARKED THE BEGINNING OF THE AMERICAN EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN VIET-NAM. WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CARDINAL SPELLMAN AND WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, THE AMERICAN NAVY FACILITATED THIS GREAT MIGRATION OF REFUGEES WHO LEFT EVERYTHING OF MATERIAL VALUE TO PRESERVE THEIR FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THEIR FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE AND FREEDOM TO PRESERVE THEIR CATHOLIC FAITH. THEREFORE ILLING MAY WISH TO CALL THE ATTENTION OF CASAROLI TO THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT CATHOLIC MIGRATION TO THE SOUTH AND EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT HIS HOLINESS MIGHT APPROPRIATELY WISH TO ALLUDE TO THIS GREAT MOVEMENT OF CATHOLIC REFUGEES WHEN HE COMMENTS ON THE CONTINUING NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACKS AND THE GENERAL ESCALATION OF THE VIOLENCE HANOI HAS INITIATED.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 199586

I. WE APPRECIATE THE EXCELLENT WORK BEING DONE BY THE UNITED STATES CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES AND OTHER CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN SOUTH VIET-NAM. THESE CHARITABLE EFFORTS HAVE BECOME ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF THE INCREASED NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND OTHER WAR VICTIMS CREATED BY THE RECENT FIGHTING.

2. WE ARE POUCHING ADDITIONAL MATERIAL ON VIET-NAM (ATTENTION ILLING) WHICH YOU MAY GIVE VATICAN OFFICIALS.

3. AMBASSADOR LODGE HAS BEEN INFORMED OF THIS MATTER. KISSINGER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, REFUGEES, POLITICAL SITUATION, RELIGIOUS LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: kelleyw0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE199586
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JRBULLINGTON:BK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740254-0448
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740955/aaaabuew.tel
Line Count: 212
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. ROME 11881; B. SAIGON 11478
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 APR 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <13 MAR 2003 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PAPAL CONCERN OVER SITUATION IN SOUTH VIET-NAM
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, VT, VS
To: ROME
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005